

Home this Christmas by GallifreyGod

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Summary:

Hopper has been away in Vietnam for ten months, leaving Joyce to wait for him to come home. Maybe Christmas miracles do exist.

1. Chapter One

Author's Note:

The song for this fic is Home this Christmas by Justin Bieber and The Band Perry
{its an amazing song fr}

She waited and waited. Weeks? Months? Years? It didn't matter how long, Joyce would wait an entire eternity if she had to. She knew that there was a ridiculously large chance that Hopper wouldn't be home for Christmas, but that didn't stop her from getting her hopes up. Given that Hopper was in Vietnam and she was still in Hawkins, she knew that their letters may be quite a few weeks different. The last letter she received from Jim stated that he honestly didn't know if he would be there for Christmas... That letter was on November 26th. With weeks of no letters after that, Joyce became rather worried. How long until the black town cars would show up with a folded flag and a set of dog tags?

Joyce tried not to think about that possibility, but almost month of no contact could only wrack her nerves even more. She heard the about the battle in Ia Drang Valley on the radio. After doing the math, she knew that if something had happened to Hopper, right around the 26th would be the last letter she would get. It was stressful to wait to see if the letters ended since she would receive plenty from the days before. When the mailman came on the 27th with no letter, she spent the entire day vomiting. Hopper had written to her every single day, what happened to him?

Looking out the window

Waiting for your headlights

To pull up in the driveway

It's really coming down tonight

The tree was standing proudly in her living room, the lights were

strung on every surface, and two lonely stockings hung on the mantle. Joyce had decorated on December 1st, just in case Hopper came home in between then and Christmas. With each day passing, the sight of lights and snow made her depressed, and the scent of cranberry and pine made her want to vomit.

All Joyce could do on Christmas Eve was sit in the window and wait. She tried to bake cookies but that resulted in salty cookies since she was far too distracted to read 'salt' instead of 'sugar'. She tried to occupy her mind with television but all the Christmas romance movies were on. She prayed for the first time in a very long time, but that didn't even touch it. All she could do was sit and stare out into the snow.

I'm scared that you won't make it

through the storm

You should be here with me

safe and warm

Christmas Eve melted into Christmas morning ever so slowly. Joyce couldn't bring herself to move from the spot she was in. Her eyes stayed glued to the window for endless hours and didn't wander once. It wasn't fair, plain and simple. Joyce rarely asked '*why me*' or '*why Hop*', but tonight, that was the only question on her mind. Why not Ted Wheeler, why not John Sinclair? Why not David Henderson? Why not Calvin Powell or Benny Hammond? No, it had to be *Hopper* of all people who were drafted to fight in a useless war. It wasn't fucking fair.

Joyce could hear the radio from the kitchen, not even bothering to turn it off. Hawkins 98.6's Donnie Jameson continuously talked about the roads being snowed in and the downfall of 8ft of snow; which was just the frosting on top of the Christmas cookie. She just waited, what else could she do? She spent the past 10 months waiting patiently for Hopper to return and she was going to spend Christmas

waiting as well.

I'll be waiting under the mistletoe

While you're driving here through the winter snow

Baby think of me if it helps to get you home

Joyce knew that when she last kissed Hopper goodbye, it could very well be her final moment with him. She tried not to think about that day but whenever it crossed her mind, it was like the tears were still wet on her cheeks. She had continued to kiss him through her sobs until the train between them began to move. When that memory came, she couldn't help but to also remember the hands of three officers struggling to pull her away from the train window.

She would never forget Hopper's burning tears that dripped onto her cheeks as he kissed her, it felt like acid being poured on her face. Hopper never cried, but that day seemed like every tear he stored for 22 years came bursting out. Most of the time, the only thing that could end the hysterical sobbing from that memory was for Joyce to clutch his pillow. It still smelled like him.

When the only gift that I really need

Is to have your arms wrapped around me

Baby think of me if it helps to get you home

Home this Christmas

People had tried to convince Joyce to leave Hopper before he was sent to Vietnam. 'You'll save yourself the worrying.' or 'That way it won't be as bad if he doesn't come home.' Joyce could only look at

them in shock and disgust. She couldn't even imagine leaving the love of her life before he goes off to fight for his country. She couldn't imagine leaving him period! The audacity of some people was repugnant. She planned on waiting the rest of her life for him to come home, and she wouldn't stop until she saw him walk in the door.

People had told her that it was likely that Hop would cheat on her during deployment, but she knew him better than that. He would never do that to her, not in a million years. He was the most loyal man she had ever met. She knew that thought wouldn't even cross his mind. Joyce could only assume it was their way of trying to convince her to leave him, but it wasn't going to work. Jim Hopper was the only man for her. He was her hero.

I'm praying that you make it home tonight

So we can lay down by the fireside

You and I

Till Christmas morning

It was late and there was no sign of Hopper. Not a single headlight coming either way down the road for hours. Joyce would've stayed in that chair all night if she could keep her eyes open. Wrapping herself in an afghan, she pulled herself out of the chair and grabbed the book she attempted to read. She sighed as she moved towards the bookcase, placing the copy of 'To Kill a Mockingbird' back in its spot.

Just as she turned to retreat to her bedroom, she saw a flash of light accompanied by the sound of crunching snow. Her heart sped up to lightning speed as she ran to look out the window. A black town car with military plates was slowly treading up her driveway through the falling snow. Her quickly beating heart quickly ceased its thumping for what felt like an eternity.

"Oh God please, please God don't let that be what I think it is." Joyce

said as tears began to stream down her cheeks harder than ever. She felt her stomach churn at the thought of it being anybody but Hopper stepping out of the car. It had to be Hopper. Please, God, it has to be Hopper. If they were to show up at her doorstep with the folded flag on Christmas, she would never be able to handle it.

The back passenger door opened and time seemed to be going slower than possible. Uniform-clad legs swiveled out of the seat and Joyce felt her heart beating in her throat. As the soldier stepped out of the car, his face glowed in the reflection of the porch light.

Baby think of me if it helps to get you home, home this Christmas

2. Chapter Two

Summary for the Chapter:

SORRY TO LEAVE YOU HANGING

Notes for the Chapter:

Merry Christmas

Joyce's heart was beating in her chest at a rapid pace. She saw the familiar outline of a prominent nose and a dirty blonde 5 o'clock shadow on the man's face. She exhaled a relieved breath she didn't know she had been holding for ten months.

'Hopper.' She whispered almost silently.

He was home. Hopper was home from the war.

Jim started to remove his envelope cap in what looked like slow motion as he began walking towards the porch. Joyce ran quicker than the speed of light to the door. As quick as her nimble hands could work, she ripped the door open.

"Hopper!" She sobbed with immeasurable joy as floodgates opened in her tear ducts. Barefoot and only wrapped in an afghan, Joyce bolted out the door into the snowy night.

"Joycie." Hopper cried out into the cold air as he caught her in his arms. While he swung her around in his arms, Joyce gripped his face and crashed her lips into his. Holding him felt like she had come home from her own war. His scent was intoxicating and his blue eyes sparkled in the reflection of the Christmas lights.

"298 days, Hop. Every single one of them I waited for you." Joyce bawled joyfully before pressing her lips back to his.

"I missed you so much, sweetheart. Not a day went by where I didn't pray to wake up next to you. I kissed your picture every single day when I woke up and when I went to bed." Jim cried as he set her back down on the ground.

"Private Hopper." One of the Lieutenants said as he stepped next to Hopper.

"Lieutenant Jones." Hopper replied with a salute.

"Welcome home Private Hopper, and Merry Christmas. You've done your country proud." The Lieutenant said with a returning salute before stepping back in the vehicle.

Joyce smiled up at Hopper with pride swelling in her heart. "Merry Christmas Private Hopper."

Before Hopper replied, he sunk onto his knee in the snow and pulled out a velvet box. "Joyce, you've stuck with me through everything and I couldn't imagine living my life without you. Will you marry me?" Hopper asked as he flipped the box open.

Joyce didn't even look at the ring before crying out 'yes' like a mantra. Hopper slipped the ring on her finger before picking her up and carrying her through the snow, not bothering to detach his lips from hers.

It was a merry Christmas indeed.

Notes for the Chapter:

Thanks Duffahh Brothaaas